A Comparative Study of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi's Detective Fiction

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Introduction:

Comparative literature is an academic field dealing with the literature of two or more different linguistic, cultural or national groups. Comparative literature may also be performed on works of the same language if the works originate from different nations or cultures among which that language is spoken .There is a movement among compatriots in the US and other part of the world to re-focus the discipline away from the nation -based approach with which it has previously been associated towards a cross -cultural approach that pays no heed to national borders .Works of this nature include Galati Chakravorty Spivak's Death of a Discipline, David Damrosch's What is World Literature? Thriller is a genre of literature, film, video, gaming and television that uses suspense, tension, and excitement as the main elements. Common methods in crime thrillers are mainly ransoms, captivities, heists, revenge, kidnappings. More common in mystery thrillers are investigations and the whodunit technique. Homer's Odyssey is one of the oldest stories in the western world and is regarded as an early prototype of the thriller. A thriller is villain-driven plot, whereby he presents obstacles that the hero must overcome. As far as detective fiction is concerned it is a branch of crime fiction that centers upon the investigation of a crime by a detective, either professional or amateur. It is the most popular form of both mystery fiction and crime fiction. If we go back to the origin of this genre, " The Three Apples" in Arabian Nights is the first detective story. As far as medieval age is concerned 'The Three Princess of Serendip' is a Persian fairy tale and has some characteristics of a detective story. In it the princess are the" detectives"and find the missing camel. The first modern detective story is Edgar Allan Poe's ' The Murders in the Rue Morgue'(1841).The first detective novel is 'The Moonstone (1868)by Wilkie Collins but others consider Dickens's own novel'Bleak House'(1853)as an important book in the formation of the modern detective novel. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is the most famous fictional detective ever created. The period between the two world wars saw a tremendous output of classic mystery writings by female authors in England.

The Queen of mysteries was Agatha Christie. She is the world's biggest selling mystery writer. The Guinness Book of World Records places Christie as the best-selling author of all time. Ngaio Marsh, Dorothy Sayres, Margary Allingham P.D.James and others were also prominent in the field. Sleuth Miss Marple, Belgian detective Hercule Poirot and so many other memorable characters are the creation of Agatha Christie. Agatha was one of the most successful crime novelists and playwrights of the twentieth century. She wrote 82 detective novels .I selected randomly three of her best detective novels. It was just like plucking some beautiful flowers from a garden full of flowers. In an attempt to give biographical sketch I have tried to cover major incidents of her life.She was born on 15 September 1890 in the town of Torquay, England. She read Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series. After her graduation, she and her mother traveled to Egypt, which inspired her writing. In 1914, 24 year old Agatha met 25 year old Archibald Christie, an aviator. The couple married on December, 24, 1914.Hercule Poirot, her character appeared in 33 of her novels. Her long writing career came to an end after her death on January 12,1976 in Oxfordshire.

In her *Death On The Nile* Linnet Ridgeway who has everything like beauty ,wealth and good husband as desired by any woman.Her husband, Simon Doyle, is engaged to Linnet's close friend Jaqueline de Bellefort.Jaqueline follows the happy couple everywhere they go, she tells

detective Hercule Poirot about her intention to shoot Linnet in the head. Shortly after, Linnet is found murdered. Death On The Nile depicts jealousy, affairs, revenge and gossip to make it more interesting. On a ship travelling down the Nile, tensions are high and everybody is suspect. It is so much slower than And Then There Were None. It takes nearly half of the book before murder is committed. The second half of the book is highly interesting as it unfolds the murder mystery.

And *Then There Were None* is about eight people, all strangers to each other, are invited to Indian Island, off the English coast. The murders mystery baffles the police until a manuscript in a bottle is found. The late Judge Wargrave wrote the manuscript explaining that he planned murders because he wanted to punish those whose crimes are not punishable under law. He frankly admits his intention that is lust for blood and pleasure in seeing the guilty punished. He discusses how he chose his victims and how he did away with Marston, Mr and Mrs Rogers, Macarthur, and Emily Brent. He then describes how he tricked Armstrong into helping him fake his own death, promising to meet the doctor by the cliffs to discuss the plan. When Armstrong arrived, Wargrave pushed him over the edge into the sea. His ruse enabled him to dispose of the rest of the guests without drawing their suspicion.

Murder On The Orient Express also revolves round a murder mystery. Hercule Poirot, private detective and retired Belgian police officer refuses Ratchett's case when he was in the Orient Express. Ratchett tells Poirot he has been receiving threatening letters and that someone is trying to kill him. Poirot is wakened by a cry from Ratchett's compartment next to him. M.Bouc informs Poirot that Ratchett has been murdered and the murderer is still aboard the train. Poirot tells M.Bouc that he will investigate the case. The piece of paper with the word Armstrong on it helps Poirot to figure out who Ratchett really is and why someone wanted to murder him. Cassetti collected a ransom from the wealthy Armstrong family, but killed the child. Poirot concludes that Ratchett is the Cassetti. Poirot gathers all of the passengers into the dining car and propounds two possible solutions .The first solution is that a stranger entered the train and killed Ratchett. The second solution is that all of the passengers aboard the Orient Express were involved in the murder. Mrs Hubbard, revealed as Linda Arden, admits that the second solution is correct.

As far as detective fiction is concerned our continent Asia has rich heritege of it. This genere is deeply rooted in it. Satyajit Ray (1921-1992),Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay (1899-1970) and Ibne Safi(1926- 1980) are famous in Asia for their detective works. I have selected three novels of Ibne Safi randomly to compare them with the novels of Agatha Christie.

Ibne Safi was born in Allahabad on July 26,1926.He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Agra University and started his career as an editor at 'Nikhat Publications' in 1948.He commenced writing detective stories in 1952 and in the same year he migrated to Pakistan. He was inspired by Qaisi Rampuri's 'Talismi Fawwara' and Talism-e-Hoshruba(an Urdu fable), which he read regularly. He was the pioneer of the mystery genre in Urdu literature. His through study of English, Urdu and Persian literature enabled him to write extraordinary detective fiction. He blended mystery with humour, law enforcement and Science fiction. His creative mind imagined and foresaw robot, laser beam, cloning etc. He merged these inventions into his plots with equal skills while writing detective fiction. His superb understanding of human nature gave his characters a living existence. He wrote 245 books at a rate of two books a month. He had tremendous flair and sophistication, says Indian poet /lyricist Javed Akhtar. "Ibne Safi's novels created an imaginary city that could have been the San Francisco of the 50,in India. His penchant for villains with striking names like Gerald Shastri and Sang Hi taught me the importance of of creating larger -than life

characters such as Gabbar and Mogambo as a scriptwriter." His leading characters Colonel Faridi and Ali Imran are scholars and gentlemen. They also have exceptional physical strength and are master spies. He had a great ability to read and analyse the values prevalent in society. He told us that the uncertainty of future breeds crimes. He also showed that brilliance of mind, commitment to the job and dedication are values that always pay off.

I have selected his three novels randomly out of 245 novels. The selected novels are *Mysterious Screams, The Dangerous Man* and *The House of Fear*. His Mysterious Screams is about an old mansion in which a man, believed to have died long ago, returns to live in. Another chief character American young man receives an antique casket from the girl of his dreams who appears and disappears like a dream. The connection between these two incidents is established by the protagonist, detective Ali Imran. In The House of Fear the protagonist finds dead people in an empty house with three knife wounds each placed at exactly five inches. The hero, who is considered an idiot by his colleagues, solves the case. He is fond of Mirza Ghalib's poetry. In' The Dangerous Man' Imran, the detective arrests criminals with the help of a socialite, Roshi.

Review of the earlier literatures :

Though there is ample research work is done on detective fiction of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi but not as a comparative study on the detective fiction of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi. As far as Ibne Safi is concerned there is no such research work in English and no comparative work with Agatha Christie. This research work wil explore more about creative genius of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi.

Hypothesis

1 . Agatha Christie was an outstanding detective fiction writer and same is true about Ibne Safi and through a comparative study of their major works readers will be benifitted as there is no comparative work available regarding these two distinguished writers.
2. Critical analysis of their works will be a unique experience because both writers represented social life of their respective continent and their style of depicting mystery and unfolding it will be focused through the comparative study. 3.This study is an attempt to bring together two giants of detective fiction and to point out similiarities and differences.
4.Agatha Christie's popularity is world wide but Ibne Safi is popular only among Urdu readers. I have taken his translated three novels for the present study. It is also a critical comparison of leading characters of both the writers.

Objectives of present research work:

1.To explore the fictional writing of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi.
2.To study the characteristics of detective novel represented in the fiction of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi.
3.To reveal the crime investigation methods of leading characters of both Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi.
4.To bring to light methods of crimes as depicted in their works which would help people to prevent crimes.
5.To imbibe the importance of careful and alert behaviour in day to day life.
6.To help readers to understand diverse cultures and to differentiate them. 7.To know the causes of crimes and remedies.

Significance of the study

Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi divulged in detail regarding crimes, background of criminals and how

the protagonists solve mystery. Their works are vast and Agatha is known to all over the world but Ibne Safi may not be familiar to English readers and this study will give new dimension to their works.Protagonist of Ibne Safi will get more appreciation than the protagonist of Agatha Christie because he solves problems prevalent in our society.

Scope of the study

Both the writers wrote more detective fiction and it is not possible to take all for comparative study purpose so I have selected three novels of each writer. These selected novels are popular and immensely interesting.These novels are exceptionally mysterious and protagonists have logical inference for their every action.

Methodology

The present study is an attempt to focus on the detective fiction writings of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi of two diverse countries and cultures but they got unique
position in detective fiction writings.The critical analysis of their works will be a best method to get more pleasure and also helpful to understand their works. So the methodology is analytical and it requires reading of books, critical works, other information related to pretsent research work is available in the print as well as non-print media and also to take help of internet.This study will proceed from the reading of the selected three fictions of each writer. It will be close textual analysis and it will be highly useful in present research work. It will also investigatory as each fiction will be investigated so that one can find out the expected result. The British investigated crimes will be compared with the Indian investigated crimes. Scope of the Study The present research will help to know the social problems prevalent in Asian subcontinent and England and their eradication .

Chaptrisation

1)introduction
2)A close critical analysis of the three novels of Agatha Christie
3)A close critical analysis of three novels of Ibne Safi
4)A comparative study of the novels of Agatha Christie and Ibne Safi
5)Conclusion

Conclusion

Thus, the detective fictions of Agatha Christie are like treasure and are extremely interesting, full of mystries and worthy for the research purpose. Its analytical study will definitely show newer methods of crime investigation and help to understand British social life. Ibne Safi, the Arthur Conan Doyle of Asian subcontinent , wrote superb detective fiction and analytical study of his fiction will help to understand social conditions of Asian subcontinent as well as psychology of criminals. His.

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